

SKETCH

DRAWN FROM THE RECORDS

OF THE

British Factory at St. Petersburg,

AND DESIGNED TO ELUCIDATE

THE HISTORY OF THAT BODY.

From 1716 to 1824.

“Certainly it is Heaven upon Earth, to have
“A Man’s mind move in Charity, rest in Providence,
“And turn upon the Poles of Truth.”—BACON.

“God be our good guide.”

MOTTO OF THE RUSSIA COMPANY.

LONDON:

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1824.

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A
S K E T C H
FROM
THE RECORDS OF THE BRITISH FACTORY
AT
ST. PETERSBURG.

I HAVE been induced to attempt the following Sketch of the History of the British Factory at St. Petersburg, from a thorough conviction that certain allegations, relative to that body and its chapel, as stated in an Act of Parliament passed in England, and printed in June, 1823, intituled, "An Act to declare valid certain Marriages that have been solemnized at St. Petersburg, since the Abolition of the British Factory there,"—are entirely unfounded; and can easily be refuted, by evidence drawn from authentic sources.

Indeed the alleged abolition of the Factory, and the assertions consequent on that allegation, to be found in the Act of Parliament alluded to, are so contrary to the facts of the case, as they exist under our daily observation, that any refutation of them would be unnecessary, were it not to be apprehended that a document emanating from such high authority,

may have considerable weight, if not now, possibly at some future period, with those persons who are not well enough acquainted with the history of the Factory, and the contents of the Manifest of 1807 (on which it is presumed the framers of the Act of Parliament have founded their erroneous statements), to be aware what clear proofs can be given of the uninterrupted existence of the Factory, from the year 1716 until the present day.

With a view to dispel all doubts on the subject, it is my intention to lay before my readers such extracts from the Records kept by the Factory, from the last Treaty of Commerce, and from the Manifest of 1st January, 1807, as will display all the bearings of the case, accompanied by occasional observations on the subject, as the matter rises before me, whereby I hope to be able to shew,

1st. The origin and nature of the Factory as a body.

2ndly. Its continued existence under every change of circumstances, not only in the estimation of the Russia Company, and of the British Government, but also in that of the government of this country, from its original establishment up to the present time; and,

3rdly. Its rights with regard to its highly respectable Church establishment.

Being actuated by no other motives in undertaking this task, than a desire to elucidate the truth, and to be of service to a body of men whom I most sincerely

respect and esteem, I trust I can safely rely on the indulgence of my readers, for a candid consideration of my remarks, and on their excuse for the defects in style and composition, which will be found in the following Sketch.

I am not aware in what year the British merchants were first embodied at Archangel, as the earliest records now in their possession commence only with the year 1716 ; but it may be presumed, that they had already been there for some time, before they became regularly organised as a body, and adopted the plan of keeping minutes of their proceedings, as there are now in the possession of the Factory, covers for a communion table and pulpit, on which are embroidered inscriptions, stating, that they were presented to the church by Charles Goodfellow, British consul in those parts, in 1706 ; also, a church register, commencing in the same year.

The first meeting on record was held at the house of their treasurer, on the 30th April, 1716, and was styled, a Meeting of the British Company. On that occasion they fixed a rate on the amount of goods imported and exported, and a port-charge on British ships ; and “ resolved to write for a minister, his salary to be 100*l.* per year, free house and firing, and his travelling expenses to Archangel, and from thence to Moscow.” In March, 1719, at a meeting in Moscow of the persons who met at Archangel in 1716, the resolution on the subject of writing for a chap-

lain was confirmed ; and it appears, that until the trade was removed to St. Petersburg, it was the practice of the Factory to reside at Archangel during the summer, and at Moscow during the winter months ; having a church or chapel at each place, their minister moving with them, and officiating in both cities.

By the minutes of a meeting held at Archangel, 12th November, 1717, it appears, that they had procured a chaplain ; and a resolution was passed, “ that the chaplain be desired to offer up petitions in his prayer before the sermon, for his Czarish Majesty, and for the British Factory residing in these parts.” In this we have the first proof on record of the Factory having acquired that title ; and it is gratifying to reflect, that it was ushered into notice, on an occasion so solemn, as a prayer to the Almighty, in the church which they had founded.

From that period, until 1723, the Records contain little besides the necessary regulations of charges raised for the support of the church.

His imperial majesty, Peter the Great, having been pleased to remove the trade from Archangel to Petersburg, the Factory moved to this city, and held their first meeting here in 1723.*

The Records shew, in the clearest possible light, that the principal objects which, from the first, en-

* “ The church plate, books, and ornaments for the chapel were, on this occasion, delivered to one of the treasurers, to be sent to St. Petersburg, to remain at the disposal of the Factory.”

gaged the attention of the Factory, at their meetings, were, the maintenance of their church establishment, and the regulating of charges on British ships, and on goods: and that such have continued to be, almost exclusively, the subjects of their deliberations, from that period up to the present time. It is to this cause that we must attribute the fact, that the church establishment has always been the bond of union in the Factory; and there is not a doubt but their respectability in the eyes of the government of this country, and of all classes of the community, has been materially heightened, by the manner in which that establishment has invariably been conducted.

From 1716 until 1728, no mention is made in the Records of there being any consul, or agent, from the Russia Company in this country; and up to the latter date, the Factory conducted their affairs, maintained their church, engaged and discharged their chaplains, and fixed their rates of charges on ships and goods, without any reference to the Russia Company, although it has been shewn above, that there was a British consul at Archangel in 1706.

In 1728, Thomas Ward, Esq. is first mentioned as his Britannic Majesty's consul and agent general, and the Factory were then in communication with him. Having discharged their chaplain, they desired he would write for another for them; "his appointment to be 600 roubles per annum, with free house, his travelling expenses from England by ship-

ping to be paid by the Factory, and whenever the Factory may discharge him, his charges back to England also to be paid."

I observe by the minutes of a meeting held in March, 1731, that no chaplain had been procured at that date; and the Factory resolved, that their treasurers should be ordered to write for one, to Robert Nettleton, Esq. one of their members, who was then in England.

In 1729, the Factory sent to the consul and agent (who was then with the court at Moscow) copies of the several representations given in by them to the colleges here; and it appears from a letter addressed to him by Samuel Holden, Esq. governor of the Russia Company, that the Factory was already in correspondence with the Company, about charges and port-charges; into the latter of which was admitted an item for the Company's agent (according to a plan sent by the Factory, for the Company's confirmation), the allowance to the agent being made, as the governor's letter states, "as a testimony of our good-will, and inducement to you, to exert yourself for whatever may contribute to the advantage of the Company, the welfare of the Factory, and honour of the nation." In the same year, the governor sent to the agent a list of the freemen of the Russia Company, "in order to prevent un-freemen from trading to or from this place."

From the year 1742 until 1745 the Factory did not appoint treasurers from their own body, but em-

ployed a person to do the duties of that office under the name of an agent, paying him an annual allowance; and he was ordered to give in his accounts to the "consul-general and Factory;" which is a proof of there having been an intimate connexion between the Company and the Factory at that period.

In 1753, the Factory bought with their own funds, assisted by voluntary contributions, their present church premises, which were registered in the city books, "as a temporary expedient," in the name of Baron Wolff, who was, at that time, consul and resident.* It appears, that until 1758, when he died, the annual accounts were given in to him; but at a meeting of the Factory, held in 1759, they resolved to have their affairs, "for the present and the future," under a committee of three members; and they took their books and funds into their own hands again. In 1760, they wrote to the Governor and Court of Assistants, for their advice and assistance, relatively to transferring the church-house, saying, "it was much to be wished, that the Factory mansion-house should be registered in the King's name, and be declared a place set apart for Divine worship, for the use of the British Factory, to all succeeding times." The Factory had an idea, that the governor's influence at home might procure a recommendation to his Bri-

* May not this circumstance of the Factory's chapel having been originally registered in the name of the British resident, be the origin of its being considered by the Russian government as the ambassador's chapel?

tannic Majesty's minister at this court to get it so registered; but the measure appears not to have been carried through, for, in 1761, there is a minute of its having been transferred in the city books to the name of the Governor and Court of Assistants of the Russia Company; of which body, it need scarcely be observed, the Factory were then, and continue to be, the chief branch in this country. It is declared in the Records, that the registry was considered as being "in trust for the Factory;" and the property continued to be styled in their books, "the Factory mansion-house."

In the interval between 1761 and 1765, nothing occurs, in the Records, to throw any additional light on the subjects I am treating of; and I must, in this place, call the attention of my readers to the fact, that the Factory had already existed at St. Petersburg for forty-two years, and had been always fully acknowledged as such, both by the Russian government, and by the Russia Company, without any treaty of commerce having been made between this country and Great Britain. The first treaty of the kind was ratified in 1766; and the Factory, in a body, waited on the ambassador, Sir George Macartney, to thank him for having negotiated the same.

On the death of the Company's agent, Mr. Swallow, in 1766, the Factory wrote to the governor, stating, that until his successor should be appointed, the interest of the trade would be attended to by the Factory.

In 1783, the Factory's chapel, having, from the increase of British subjects at this place, become much too small for the congregation; and the Factory's fund being insufficient to rebuild it; a letter was written to the Company's agent, "desiring the favour of his laying their sentiments before the worshipful Russia Company, and of requesting their permission, as well as assistance, to enable them to carry such a plan into execution."

In consequence of this application, a general court of the Russia Company was held, and they "resolved that the Company do permit the building of a new chapel at St. Petersburg, and that the Factory be assisted with a sum, not exceeding 2000*l.* by the Company, towards building the said chapel." In May, 1784, the Factory wrote a letter to the Company's agent, "returning their grateful acknowledgements for the unanimous and generous contribution of the Russia Company;" and stated, at the same time, that difficulties, with respect to obtaining a proper place for erecting the chapel, had retarded their determination to build it. This permission to build a new chapel was never acted upon; and the contribution of 2000*l.* was not drawn in.

A letter, written in 1787, by Lord Carmarthen to the consul, shews that the Russian government "objected to renew the treaty of commerce of 1766; and had made proposals, with respect to navigation and commerce, which were considered in London as totally inadmissible." This letter, the consul was re-

requested “ to communicate to the gentlemen of the Factory, and the rest of his Majesty’s subjects in Russia ; in order that they might adjust their concerns, to the present situation of the two countries, with respect to commerce.” His lordship, after expressing his opinion that Russia would still see her own interest, and come to a fair arrangement with England, adds, “ In the mean time, I think the trade between the two countries must still flourish, though no commercial treaty exist between them ;” and concludes his letter with a most flattering testimonial of “ his Majesty’s approbation of the liberal behaviour of the British Factory at St. Petersburg, and that of the Russia Company in London, in declining any advantages, however considerable, which might have been derived to themselves, at the expense of sacrificing any concerns of a more extensive nature, in which, either the political or commercial welfare of his Majesty’s subjects could have been interested in general.”

The treaty of 1766 having expired, six houses of the Factory inscribed themselves as foreign guests ; by which they subjected themselves to pay dues to the Dooma, or Town Hall, and even to personal service, as city officers ; but, on the other hand, obtained the advantage of paying their customs in Bank notes : while foreign merchants, not inscribed as guests, were obliged to pay them in specie dollars, which was a loss to them of 10 to 14 per cent. Nevertheless, sixteen houses of the Factory continued

to trade as before, without any molestation or detrimental circumstance, excepting the difference in duties, as mentioned above. The *Gorodovoyé Polojénié*, or “Municipal Code,” published in 1785, appears to have given rise to the denomination of foreign guest; but it seems clearly to have left foreign merchants the option of either becoming such, or of carrying on their trade as before.

The first mention of the Factory’s Poor’s Fund, is in the year 1768; when, I presume, it was first instituted. It was raised by a tax which the houses of the Factory levied on themselves, and which was paid by them individually, without being covered by any charge, either on goods or on ships. On the same footing, the poor’s fund has invariably been, and continues to be, raised; and it has enabled the Factory to grant assistance to British objects of compassion, to an extent which does them great credit, and has excited the admiration of all other foreigners resident in this city.

The above mentioned state of things, with regard to the non-renewal of the treaty, was still in force in 1789, when a letter, of which the following is an extract, was communicated to the Factory, by his Britannic Majesty’s consul, the same having been written to him, by the ambassador at this court, for that purpose: “I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that I am authorised by Lord Carmarthen, to express to the gentlemen of the British Factory, the most thorough approbation of his Majesty’s ministers, of their

conduct since the expiration of the treaty of commerce."

By the convention of the 25th March, N. S. 1793, signed in London, the treaty which had expired in 1787 was prolonged for six years, or until another could be formed; and in 1797, a new treaty was made, which expired on the 25th March, 1801.

In 1798, the Factory having subscribed, as a body, 2000*l.* to the public voluntary contribution in England, had the high gratification of receiving the approbation of their sovereign, George the Third, expressed in a letter, from Lord Grenville to Sir Charles Whitworth, "his Majesty having signified his pleasure, that he should communicate to the British Factory at St. Petersburg, the sense which his Majesty entertains of the zeal and loyalty that have been manifested by that respectable body of his subjects, on the occasion of the late subscription."

From 1716 until 1798, the appointment of chaplains, to perform service in the Factory's chapel, was a matter subject to no degree of doubt; as the Factory exercised their right to appoint them, whenever a clergyman of the Church of England, to whom they thought proper to offer the chaplainship, happened to be here; and the governor and court of assistants confirmed such appointments. But when there was no eligible person here, they applied to the Russia Company to provide one for them. In 1798, however, a dispute arose between the Factory and the Russia Company on this subject; the latter hav-

ing thought proper entirely to overlook a strong recommendation from the gentlemen of the Factory, in favour of a clergyman who was then here, and to appoint in his stead a person altogether unknown to them. This being an infringement of the rights of the Factory, they held a meeting, and it was there decided, by twenty-one votes against nine, to reject the latter, and to elect the former clergyman as their chaplain. " Out of respect to the governor and worshipful court of assistants, they communicated their resolution to them, through the Company's agent, with their reasons for acting as they did. Those reasons were accompanied by extracts from the Records of the Factory, which proved their right to elect their own chaplain, the same having existed from 1716 until that time; and they were replied to in a report of a committee of the Russia Company, who asserted, that their charter gave them the right, at all events, and that the practice of former years proved it also.

Without extracting at length the records relative to that unfortunate dispute, or detailing the several attempts made by both parties to effect a reconciliation, I will only further state, that the Factory maintained their right (which they proved by references to their Records, and even to the charter of the Russia Company, were well founded); kept possession of their chapel, and provided for the maintenance of their church establishment by levying port-charges, in the same manner as before, on all British ships, and on the goods exported in them. They also con-

tinued to raise their poor's fund, by a tax, levied on the amount of duties paid by each house, as had been the case for a long series of years. This state of things continued until 1813; when, to the great satisfaction of all parties, the Russia Company confirmed the Factory's choice of a chaplain, and perfect harmony was restored between them.

By the 2d separate article of the convention between Great Britain and Russia, dated 5-17 June, 1801, the treaty of commerce of 10-21 February, 1797, was confirmed; and it was agreed, that all the stipulations contained in the same, should be maintained in their full extent.

In the interval between 1801 and 1807, the Records of the Factory offer nothing particularly worthy of comment, excepting the correspondence between them and the Company, relative to their unfortunate differences, which were still unsettled (as will have been seen above) in 1807, when the treaty of commerce was about to expire, and negotiations were carrying on for its renewal. But this unhappy circumstance, as may be seen by a reference to the Records, made not the slightest difference in the communications between the Factory and the British ambassador.

The negotiations between the ambassador and this court, for a renewal of the treaty of commerce, which expired 13-25 March, 1807, were not attended with success; and, consequently, on the 20th June, O.S. (2d July, N.S.,) 1807, the greater part

of the members of the Factory became foreign guests, in compliance with the manifest of the 1st of January, 1807, intituled, "An Imperial Manifest, concerning the new rights and privileges granted to the Merchants."

I am now arrived at the period, when, according to the erroneous statement in the Act of Parliament, "the British Factory at St. Petersburg, was, by the manifesto of the Emperor of Russia, declared to be abolished, from and after the 20th day of June 1807;" and in order to shew the case in a clear point of view, I shall lay before my readers full extracts from the manifest of the 1st January, 1807 (which it is presumed is the manifesto alluded to in the Act of Parliament), and also of the contents of such articles of the treaty, as were not at all affected by, nor alluded to, in that manifest.

A reference to the manifest of 1807, will shew, that it does not contain one word indicative of the abolition of the Factory: but I presume that it has been taken for granted, by the framers of the Act of Parliament, that the concluding sentence of the tenth paragraph of the third section of that document implied as much; that being the only part in which a treaty of commerce is mentioned. The fallacy of such an inference can, however, easily be shewn.

In order to put this beyond all doubt, I shall here state all the contents of the section in which the paragraph alluded to stands. It is intituled, "Section

concerning Foreign Merchants in Russia ;” and the following is a translation, word for word, of such parts of it as at all relate to British merchants.

Section 3d. (of the Manifest of 1st Jan. 1807.)

¶ 8. “ The civil and commercial privileges of foreign merchants, which they enjoy, and have enjoyed, with particular favour, under our government, and that of our ancestors, in time of peace and war, shall henceforward be placed on the following basis.

1st. “ A subject alone has the right to inscribe himself into the guilds of Russian merchants.

2d. “ No foreigner has the right to inscribe himself into the guilds, unless such foreigner, or the wife of a foreigner in right of her husband, qualify themselves by becoming subjects of the Russian empire.

3d. “ A foreigner, not being a perpetual subject, does not enjoy any rights or privileges connected with the guilds ; still less can he demand any exclusive privileges, either civil or commercial, regarding either trade or navigation.

“ These three principles shall henceforward be general, fundamental, and immutable.”

¶ 9. “ Out of our particular attention to the advantages of the foreign merchants, the following temporary exceptions are allowed : Foreigners hitherto inscribed in the guilds, may remain in the same for six months from this time, during which they may, if such

is their wish, become Russian subjects ; or at the expiration of this term, they may acquire the rights of foreign merchants, which are clearly defined below, in the tenth and three following paragraphs." The following sentences of this paragraph regard Armenian merchants, and merchants trading on the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azof.

¶ 10. " The rights of trade, belonging to foreign merchants in Russia, are comprised under two denominations, either that of guest, or that of itinerant merchant.

" A guest is that foreign merchant, who, to obtain the settled advantages of wholesale trade, enters into not a full citizenship, at a maritime or frontier place ; and besides the custom-house duties, fixed by the general tarif and other ordinances, pays $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on a capital declared above R^s 50,000.

" An itinerant merchant is every foreigner, who, occupying himself generally with wholesale trade, either at the exchange alone, or within the precincts of the custom-house, but not in the interior of the town, pays, besides the duties, according to the tarif and other ordinances, $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on R^s 25,000, if he remain to trade more than six months ; consequently, until the expiration of six months, he pays nothing ; but at the expiration of twelve months, he either enters into the obligations and rights of a guest, or leaves the empire, or remains in the quality of a non-trading foreigner."

The next sentence regards Asiatics trading on the eastern frontier, and is followed by another, which refers to the custom-house code, confirming the regulation there laid down, that foreigners should not sell imports to, nor buy exports of, each other ; but trade by wholesale with Russian merchants only.

“ Any foreigner, either guest or itinerant merchant, may import goods which are not intended for trade, but for the private use of himself or other persons, and in such cases apply the article to the intended purpose, without the intervention of a Russian merchant.

“ It is of itself understood, that a foreigner, whether guest or itinerant merchant, not having the rights of the guilds, cannot trade by retail in his house or lodgings, nor at the Russian market ; nor can he open for that purpose, either a shop or magazine, or warehouse, or any such establishment.

“ The rules of this paragraph are to be considered general, fundamental, and unchangeable, and will have all their force, on the expiration of particular treaties, into which are admitted regulations not agreeing therewith.”

¶ 11. Defines the rights of a foreign guest.

¶ 12. The rights of a foreign guest in partnership.

¶ 13. The rights of an itinerant merchant ; but as their contents are irrelative to the subject before me, inasmuch, as they relate only to privileges conferred, but contain not a word regarding the abolition of the Factory, nor any thing that can be construed into

such a meaning, I shall not engage the time of my readers, by inserting translations of them.

I take it for granted, as stated above, that it is on the tenth paragraph, particularly on the concluding lines of it, that the erroneous opinion has been formed, that the Factory was abolished: but to come to such a conclusion, after examining the full extent of the case, is utterly impossible.

A reference to the treaty of commerce will shew, that the only part of it which clashes with the manifest, is that contained in the fourth article, relative to the species of trade which foreigners may carry on. Before the manifest was published, they could trade by wholesale, not only at the ports and frontier towns of Russia, but also in the cities in the interior; but the manifest deprives them of the latter permission, and permits none but Russian subjects to be inscribed as merchants in those cities which are neither sea-ports, nor frontier towns.

In one respect, the paragraph unquestionably made a material alteration in the situation of the British, and of all other foreign merchants, established at St. Petersburg; inasmuch, as, under the treaty, the British could trade, without paying any personal taxes; while, by the manifest, they became liable, in common with all other foreigners, to pay heavy ones: and this was sufficient to give the tenth paragraph a great degree of importance in the eyes of the Russian government; on which account it may rea-

sonably be presumed, the formal confirmation of its regulations, as stated in the concluding words of it, was inserted. In other respects, it contains nothing that interferes materially with any of the articles of the treaty of commerce. With regard to the taxes levied, it must be observed, that they are the same as are paid by those Russian merchants who have the privilege of trading on the exchange, and elsewhere, with foreign merchants. And with regard to the privilege of selling goods in the towns in the interior, it will be admitted, that it is one which the British merchants at St. Petersburg have never considered as being of any great importance to them, particularly as they are still allowed to send goods, on their own account, to the Makaria, Korennaia, and Irbitzk fairs.

I will not intrude on the time of my readers, by translating and inserting here at length the articles of the treaty which were not affected by the manifest; but I will enumerate some of the leading points in them, in order to shew the grounds on which I have asserted, that many articles of the treaty remain untouched by the contents of the manifest. For instance, the sixth article stipulates, that every assistance shall be given in loading and unloading ships; and if British subjects make contracts with any government college or chancery, for the delivery of goods, they shall be punctually fulfilled by such offices. The 13th article concerns shipwrecks, on

all which occasions all possible assistance is to be reciprocally given. The 14th stipulates for the free exercise of the Protestant religion; a privilege which has been enjoyed uninterruptedly at the Factory's chapel, even in time of war between the two countries. It also exempted the British from having troops quartered in the houses where they resided. The 15th article states under what regulations British subjects may obtain passports to leave the country. The 17th provides, that in cases of law suits, the English merchants should only be judged by the college of commerce. And I will here remark, that in 1807, when this point was discussed between our ambassador and the Russian minister, with a view to what might be the case after the expiration of the treaty, the latter stated, in writing, that, "in the manifest, nothing supposes that the disputed affairs of the British merchants should not continue under the jurisdiction of the college of commerce, excepting in case of its abolition (which circumstance was hinted at, even in 1797), when, as it would be superseded by a court of equal dignity, they would be submitted to its jurisdiction." The 20th article of the treaty concerns the due registering of contracts at the custom-house. The 22d, the brack of goods; and the 23d alludes to the package and tares of goods, with a view to preventing fraud in them. The 25th article states, "that the subjects of the two contracting powers may, in the respective

states, form with their consuls, a body, and make amongst themselves the necessary arrangements for the general interests of the Factory, provided that they shall be in nowise contrary to the laws, statutes, and decrees of the country or place where they establish themselves."

Can any one, after having perused the section of the manifest alluded to, and having compared its contents with those of the articles of the treaty, imagine for a moment, that it was intended by this government to contain such a code as should supersede all the regulations in the treaty, regarding the British merchants established at this place? What I have extracted from the treaty, is sufficient to shew, that in addition to rules with respect to the description of trade allowed to be carried on (the only part of the treaty, it must be observed, which contains regulations, *not agreeing with* those laid down in the tenth paragraph of the manifest), it contains many others connected with our trade and domiciliation in this country, concerning which the manifest is silent, but which, nevertheless, remain in force to this day, without any material, if any alteration at all, and without any new decrees having been issued regarding them, since the expiration of the treaty.

As the manifest does not touch on the points in the treaty, which I have enumerated above, is it not fair to assume, that this government intended to leave them untouched, and in force? And does not

our own experience prove, that they do continue in force, in the same degree as they did before the manifest was published?

I find myself fully authorised in adopting the above mode of stating the question, on referring to the remarks of the Russian minister for foreign affairs, on some of the articles of the treaty, and of the manifest, which had been laid before him, while negociations for a new treaty were pending in 1807. It was pointed out to him, that the British were exempted, by the treaty, from having troops quartered on them, which exemption, they feared, would cease, should the treaty expire. His remark on this point is, "As to exemption from quarters for troops, this object is absolutely a stranger to the manifest, and is not under the cognizance of the commercial department."

I doubt not, but if the subjects of the chapel, and of the Factory as a body, had also been inserted in the note laid before the said minister, his answer on them would have been nearly the same as the above; for they are no more under the cognizance of the commercial department than the other.

But nothing can more plainly shew the absence of all doubt on those two important points, than the fact, that in all the complaints and memorials presented by the Factory to the ambassador, when the treaty was about to expire (a moment when, as it must naturally be presumed, every grievance likely

to ensue from a cessation of the protection of the treaty, would be fully stated), they were never, in any way, alluded to. There could, in fact, be no doubt about them; for the manifest did not at all refer to them; and all things relative to them went on in the same manner as before its publication.

Had the manifest deprived the British merchants here of their rights as British subjects, living under the protection of the British ambassador; and compelled them to become Russian burghers (for which purpose they must have taken an oath of allegiance to his imperial Majesty, as Russian subjects), the case would have been very different; but we have found, after having been foreign guests for upwards of ten years, that to trade here under that denomination does not carry with it any burthen, except that of paying a tax to the Russian government; and that we have now as little to do with the town-hall, and the corporation, in any other respect, as we had before the expiration of the treaty of commerce.

There is on record another document, which contains a most important proof that the abolition of the Factory as a body, was never intended by his imperial Majesty; I allude to a letter dated 21st January, 1807 (three weeks after the publication of the manifest), of which the following extract is a faithful translation:

“ The minister of the interior has esteemed it a

duty imposed upon him, to lay before his imperial Majesty, the communication by which the British merchants trading in Russia, in expressing their feelings of attachment and zeal towards the person of his imperial Majesty, propose to contribute from their body, R^s 135,000.* towards defraying the expenses incurred at present, by all ranks and stations in the empire, in arming the militia. His Majesty the emperor, being always most graciously disposed towards the English merchants, as one of the most ancient commercial bodies established in this metropolis, has been pleased to permit their participating in the general contributions above mentioned, according to their wishes," &c. &c.

If any thing were wanting, in addition to the other proofs which I have given, to shew that the Factory continued to exist after the publication of the manifest, the above must be sufficient to convince the most sceptical: and I can safely leave it to every candid reader of this Sketch to decide, whether or not, the foregoing is a clear proof in the affirmative.

Having shewn, I conceive, most clearly, that the manifest of 1807 did not in the slightest degree affect the Factory as a body, I will only farther remark on this point, that however favourable the prospect may have been, with regard to a renewal of the treaty of commerce in the summer of that year (and that it was highly so, there is an unequivocal

* About 17,000*l.* sterling.

proof on record, in a clear assurance from his Britannic Majesty's minister plenipotentiary at this court), it was, unfortunately, entirely done away with by the overwhelming course of political events, which, soon after, brought on a war between the two countries, the British ambassador having been ordered to leave St. Petersburg, on the 27th October, 1807.

During the war, which continued until 1812, the British merchants were not permitted to trade ; and many of the members of the Factory went to England. But several still remained here ; and the fact that they managed the finances of the Factory so judiciously, as to be able to keep up their church establishment, and to provide for their pensioners and poor, on the same footing as in times of peace, is a circumstance which will ever redound to their honour.

The return of peace, in the year 1812, was the signal for those members of the Factory who were in England, to return to this place ; and they had again the satisfaction of being called to a meeting of the Factory, so early as the 26th April, 1813 ; at which the agent for the Russia Company, and representatives from nearly all the houses which composed the Factory in 1807, were present.

About the time of the meeting alluded to, the lamented death of Dr. Pitt caused a vacancy in the chaplainship ; and there being no clergyman here whom the Factory thought eligible to be appointed chaplain, the treasurer was ordered "to write a let-

ter to the Company's agent, expressing the Factory's desire that the Russia Company would appoint a proper person to succeed him." This application was made precisely in the same words, as on similar occasions, before the dispute arose in 1798, about the right of appointing the chaplains ; and of course, left the rights of the Factory on their original and unchangeable foundation.

The occurrences recorded by the Factory, in 1813, shew the complete renewal of their alliance with the Russia Company ; and that the governor and court of assistants shewed the most friendly disposition towards them as a body, and acquiesced in their regulations regarding port-charges, by confirming the plan sent to them, through their agent, for their approbation, according to ancient custom.

The Factory having resolved at their first meeting, 26th April, 1813, "to send to the governor and court of assistants, copies of the plans and estimates for the repairs of their chapel ;" the Company, as appears by a letter of the 25th June, from the governor to their agent, agreed to contribute 4000*l.* towards that object ; and, moreover, procured, in July, 1814, a grant of 5000*l.* in aid of the same, from the British Parliament.

Amongst the documents recorded in 1813, is a letter from one of the most respectable members of the Russia Company (who had kindly taken care of the Factory's money matters in England, for many years),

to their treasurer, congratulating him on the re-establishment of the Factory: and there are to be found in the Records many other proofs of the same sentiment being entertained, at that period, by several eminent merchants in London; and also by some English noblemen who had formerly been in Russia.

The communications of the Factory with the British ambassador were resumed on his coming to this city, and have continued with his successors, when occasions required it, in the same manner as before the embargo: a decisive proof, that those representatives of our sovereign consider the Factory as much under their protection now, as before the expiration of the treaty of commerce.

Efforts were made in 1813 to obtain a renewal of the treaty; and in 1814, when his imperial Majesty was in London, and the Russia Company had the honour of presenting an address to him, "He voluntarily alluded to the treaty, and said he should make it the subject of his early and serious consideration, on his return to Petersburg."

It must ever be a subject of regret to the Factory, that so desirable an end should not have been brought about; but it is some consolation to reflect, that the best dispositions towards it were not wanting; and it is, at the same time, highly gratifying to know, that its not having been attained has had no detrimental effect on the existence of the Factory, as a body; nor (which is of still greater moment) has it

in any degree diminished that most gracious protection of its church establishment, which it has invariably enjoyed from the sovereigns of this empire.

The Records of the Factory, during the last ten years, contain the most unequivocal proofs of the harmony existing between it and the Russia Company; each body having, on all occasions, shewn its willingness to forward the views of the other by every means in its power. The minutes of the proceedings at a meeting held in February, 1824, shew that the gentlemen of the Factory are not ungrateful to the Russia Company, for their liberality to them; and that they have been ready to reciprocate the services received, by raising, or agreeing to raise, towards the expense of building the Company's church at Cronstadt, even a larger sum, in Russian money, than the Company contributed towards the repairs of the Factory's chapel.

Having taken a cursory view of those parts of the Factory's Records, from 1716 until 1824, which bear essentially on the points which I have undertaken to elucidate, I shall proceed to make such observations on those points as will naturally arise from a contemplation of what is written in the foregoing pages.

It has been shewn, that the Factory existed as an organized body in 1716; the factors having united for the purpose of regulating the charges on goods and ships, chiefly in order to raise the necessary funds for their church establishment, which was done entirely independently of the Russia Company, and

without any reference to them. On examining the Records, it will be seen, that such was the original object of their uniting as a body ; and that, from that period up to the present day, no change has taken place in the nature and object of their institutions.

On this account, their church establishment formed originally, and is now, the bond of union by which the members of the Factory are united ; and I trust that it will ever continue to be, like the church itself, founded upon a rock.

The Factory's relations with the Russia Company appear to have commenced in 1728, therefore, at least twelve years after the former body became organized, and twenty-two years, if not more, after there was a British church at Archangel. In that year the alliance between the two bodies became apparent ; and, instead of the Factory communicating directly with the Russian courts on the subject of regulations for the trade between the two countries, they, from that period, did it through the Company's agent, who was, at the same time, consul-general.

The extract from the letter from the governor of the Russia Company, in 1729, shews in a strong light how intimately that body considered the welfare of the Factory to be connected with the advantage of the Company, and the honour of the nation ;—an union, the bonds of which have never been broken, and the benefits arising from which are as desirable to all parties, at the present, as they have been at any former period.

Soon after the connexion between the Russia Company and the Factory took place, it appears that all members of the Factory were, of necessity, free of the Russia Company; by which it is evident, that the former had become a branch of the latter. But while this is admitted, it must also be recollected, that the Factory had been, for several years before their union, independent of the Company, having already founded its own church establishment and other institutions; over all which it still kept the control on the union of the two bodies, and has continued to do so ever since.

The purchase of the church premises by the Factory, in 1753, brought forward another proof of the intimate and indissoluble connexion between them; as the building was first registered, "as a temporary expedient," in the name of the consul and resident; and on his decease it was found expedient to register it in the name of the Russia Company, that being the original body of which the Factory is a branch. This appears to have been done in preference to its being inscribed in the King's name, as had been proposed by the Factory; probably from an impression, that such a measure might, in the course of time, have alienated the property from the Factory, and made it appear to be vested in the crown of Great Britain.

The events of 1783, relative to building a new chapel, shew that the Company took a lively interest in the matter, and readily offered the Factory large pecuniary assistance towards the prosecution of that

object; and although unfortunate differences arose between the two bodies in 1798, which lasted for fifteen years, it will, nevertheless, be seen with sincere satisfaction, by the members of the Factory, that the effects to them, as a body, were not detrimental.

With equal satisfaction will they turn their attention to the most handsome manner in which the Russia Company stretched out the hand of fellowship to them in 1813, burying all animosities, and uniting with the Factory in making the necessary regulations concerning charges on the English trade at this port: and they will recollect with gratitude the liberal aid which the Company gave and obtained for them, in that year, towards rebuilding the Factory's chapel. With that munificent assistance, the Factory have enlarged their chapel, chaplain's residence, library, and other offices, and finished them in a manner which reflects honour on the British nation; and I trust that the establishment will continue, as our predecessors expressed it to be in 1760, "a place set apart for Divine worship, for the use of the British Factory (and, we will add, the British inhabitants of St. Petersburg) to all succeeding times."

All the ancient relations between the Factory and the Company were renewed at that period, and I am most happy to add, that they are still maintained in full force.

With regard to the light in which the Factory has been, and is now, viewed, by the government of this country; I have shewn that it has never depended in

any degree on the state of political affairs between Russia and England ; and for this plain reason, that the origin and nature of the Factory are entirely unconnected with politics, it being merely a body of factors, united for the purposes of providing for their church establishment, and for the British poor ; and of making arrangements relative to mercantile charges on the British trade at this port, but without interfering in the slightest degree with the laws, statutes, or ordinances of the Russian empire.

Such being the facts of the case, the existence or non-existence of the Factory as a body, and the gracious protection granted to its church establishment, cannot be imagined to depend on there being a treaty of commerce between the two countries, or not. Indeed, it has been shewn, that the Factory were countenanced as such by the Russian government for upwards of forty years, before the first treaty of the kind was concluded in 1766 ; and that from its expiration in 1787, until a new one was made in 1797, their situation in the eyes of this government was still the same ; although, in the mean time, municipal regulations had been made, which, in some respects, materially regarded all foreigners trading in this country. A state of things equally favourable to the welfare of the Factory has existed since the date of resuming their station here in 1813, although the manifest of 1807 afforded another instance of new municipal laws being promulgated, affecting, in some respects, foreign merchants ; though

made principally with a view to regulate the rights of trade of the three guilds of native Russian merchants.

The testimonial of the gracious sentiments of his imperial Majesty towards the Factory, as conveyed in the letter from the Russian minister of finance, some time after the publication of the manifest, which has been supposed to put an end to the very existence of that body; is indeed a most valuable one to them, and cannot be sufficiently prized, when we reflect, that it was not the mere expression of momentary good-will, but an assurance of "his Majesty being always most graciously disposed towards them, as one of the most ancient commercial bodies established in this metropolis."

The effects of those gracious sentiments continue to be felt by the Factory, and I trust that their gratitude for the beneficence shewn to them will ever be invariably evinced, by their attachment and zeal towards the person of his imperial Majesty, by their thorough respect for the laws, and by a perseverance in that reputable line of conduct, to which, under Providence, may be ascribed the protection which they enjoy.

What has been shewn relatively to the origin and nature of the Factory, and its progress during more than a century, is sufficient to explain the light in which the Factory has been, and must naturally continue to be viewed, by the British government. It has never been, in any degree, a political body, hav-

ing been founded solely for local purposes; and, therefore, it has never had any direct communication with his Britannic Majesty's ministers; on which account, the Records contain few instances in which it has been directly noticed by them. The extracts which I have made from the Records are, however, most important proofs, that the Factory, as a body, has been on some occasions most favourably noticed; and even at a period when, as at present, there existed no treaty of commerce between the two countries.

The Factory's communications with the British government take place now exactly in the same manner as they have always done, from the earliest period of the British merchants here having been embodied as such. On all occasions, when the interference of his Majesty's ambassador is requisite, with respect to any commercial measures of this government, the Factory, through their treasurer, apply to the British consul, and he represents the cases to the ambassador; and the effects of such applications are in nowise diminished, by the circumstance of there being no treaty of commerce between this country and England.

All those members of the Factory who have resided here since the peace of 1812, can vouch for the truth of my assertions, because they have witnessed the course of affairs; and they can bear testimony, as I do, to the most gratifying fact, that in each succeeding year they are summoned by his Britannic Majesty's ambassadors, to celebrate the birth-

day of our beloved monarch ; on which occasions, those representatives of our sovereign never fail to honour them, by proposing as a toast, " The British Factory at St. Petersburg." To persons resident in England, the latter circumstance may appear of little moment ; but to those whose lot it is to reside in a foreign land, every event which is of a nature to strengthen the bonds of affection between them and their native country, must appear as sacred as it is delightful.

The inference to be drawn from the above mentioned facts is obvious, namely, that the Factory continues to be countenanced as such by the British ambassadors at this court, in the same degree as formerly.

It now only remains, that I should make some remarks as to the rights of the Factory, with regard to their highly respectable church establishment.

That the property in the church buildings is their own, and that the right of electing a chaplain to perform service in their chapel rests in them, has been shewn most clearly, by the extracts which I have made from the Factory Records. Those rights originated with the very foundation of the Factory, and are confirmed in various instances in the course of its proceedings : they remained undoubted for more than eighty years ; and when, at the end of that long period, the court of assistants of the Russia Company thought proper to dispute them, the circumstance, although much to be regretted in many other re-

spects, was beneficial to the Factory in a material one; for it had the effect of substantiating those rights, and rendering them, “like gold, better for the proof.” While, much to the honour of both parties, it did not in anywise diminish the good will of one towards the other; proofs of which have been shewn in the statements which I have made from the Records of the Factory, regarding the benefits reciprocally conferred.

I trust it will be admitted by all impartial individuals, that I have now laid a clear case before them, and have proved that the Factory, so far from having been abolished, continues to exist for the same purposes, and to enjoy in all essential matters, the same privileges as it has done for more than a century; and that its rights, with regard to its church establishment, remain on their original foundations. This being clearly proved, the assertions in the Act of Parliament, which have called forth this Sketch, become groundless, and can have no effect as far as regards the Factory.

As the act was not passed for any public end, but merely, as far as I can learn, to serve the legal purposes of some individuals, it is not likely that any one will attempt to rectify the mistakes made by those who framed it; although that ought, in common justice, to be done. But it is on this account the more necessary, that the erroneous statements should be exposed, and their want of foundation be made evident, to all those who feel an interest in the

Factory, whether they reside here or in England; and that it should be deeply impressed upon their minds, that the British Factory at St. Petersburg does not merely continue to exist in name, but is an active body, and highly useful in all matters that are under its control and management.

I can further affirm, that the Factory is respected as such by all persons to whom it is known in this country, and that the members who now form that body have good ground for the pleasing hope, that its name will be perpetuated to the end of time, and that they and their successors will continue to enjoy the advantages arising from their alliance with the Russia Company in England, and from the most gracious protection and favour of the sovereign of this empire.

A MEMBER OF THE FACTORY.

St. Petersburg,
11-23 April, 1824.

THE END.

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